his dissent to unutterable grunts and groans whenever Nivelle spoke. These inarticulate ejaculations provoked irrepressible merriment in Briand, who was in his most puckish mood. He was in one of those phases of gay detachment which were an infallible sign that he was tired of the whole business and meant soon to resign. This he did shortly afterwards.

Robertson said nothing to me either at the Conference or immediately after it was over. Some days afterwards came his written protest. It is worth quoting because it explains the attitude which he subsequently adopted in 1918 on this question and which led to his resignation :—

". . . It seemed to me that the principle adopted was a dangerous one, because it might prove to be the thin end of the wedge which the French have for long desired to obtain for bringing the British Armies in France under definite French control, and I suggested to the Prime Minister *that it would be difficult to justify departing from the principle once it is established, because if the arrangement made is the best for one battle, it can be argued that it will be best for all.* I also stated that our officers and men could not be expected to fight nearly as well under a foreign commander ; that the Dominion Governments might object; and that entirely to entrust the fortunes of this great battle to a foreign commander,, who as yet has

had no opportunity of proving his fitness for the position, was a serious step, viewed from the standpoint of the Empire. I also mentioned the legal aspect of the case, which is that no British officer can be placed under the orders of any officer not holding His Majesty's Commission. This, however, may